

CTE Assessment System

The Arizona Career and Technical Education Skill Standards Assessment System was conceived in 2006 in response to both state and federal legislation requiring students to pass end-of-program assessments leading to licensures and/or certifications when available within each industry. The Arizona Department of Education / Career and Technical Education (CTE) forged partnerships with the University of Arizona Workforce Education Development Office (WEDO) to design and implement key system components not only to meet legislative requirements, but to provide “added value” to all users of the system: business and industry, joint technical education districts, school districts, postsecondary institutions, and most especially, students and adults seeking preparation for work.

The system was built using the secondary CTE program standards. To ensure that the resulting assessment outcomes reflect the needs of industry and transfer to postsecondary institutions, college representatives and business partners participate in the development and update of program requirements. The assessment items themselves are developed by CTE program teachers and postsecondary representatives.

The Arizona Career and Technical Education Skill Standards Assessment System is available for postsecondary use. Several colleges use the system as a “pre-test” to assess if their students may be adequately prepared to take industry certification tests. Other colleges with “capstone” courses choose the online assessment as their end of program assessment. The administration of the system, i.e., testing cycles, “pass scores,” reporting methods back to the school, etc., is uniform for both secondary and postsecondary participants. Test questions are selected randomly for each program area from the secure test bank maintained by the Department of Education. At the present time, a separate postsecondary testing system is not in development and customization is not available for test content, delivery or outcomes reporting for either postsecondary or secondary testing.

For Federal Perkins Grant funding, Colleges are asked to either report the results of industry certification testing or indicate a goal of participating in an industry certification for Perkins funded programs.

If your college is considering using the CTE Skill Standards Assessment System for an end-of-program assessment:

1. Review the standards used comparing those standards against the competencies used for your program at your college.
2. Consider available testing “windows” when the online system will be open for testing (one period in the fall and one in spring).
3. Determine who at your college will be responsible for forwarding the resulting test documents to the participating students. Transcripts showing performance on the test as well as a certificate for those who successfully complete the test will be forwarded to one contact at your college for distribution to students. ADE is unable to mail results directly to students.
4. Contact ADE (Barbara Zalazinski, 602-542-3425) to clarify the IT system requirements, coordinator requirements, test administration and potential training for test proctors.